Tri-partite talks for national interest

Friday, 19 September 2008

The Caretaker Government seeks a tri-partite sit-in to resolve issues of national interest as disclosed by its chief spokeperson. Khaleda Zia, the BNP Chairperson has expressed a rather muted willingness for such talks but the AL has come back strongly against it saying that Sheikh Hasina has to be "permanently" released and that Khaleda Zia has to "seek public apology for all the misdeeds of her regime" before such a dialogue took place.

The Caretaker Government seeks a tri-partite sit-in to resolve issues of national interest as disclosed by its chief spokeperson. Khaleda Zia, the BNP Chairperson has expressed a rather muted willingness for such talks but the AL has come back strongly against it saying that Sheikh Hasina has to be "permanently" released and that Khaleda Zia has to "seek public apology for all the misdeeds of her regime" before such a dialogue took place. As far as the question of "national interest" is concerned, people are wary of this phrase as it had been frequently used in the past and is still being used to justify anything and everything including plunder of public and private wealth, regime changes, imposition of authoritarian and dictatorial governments - all of which have ultimately led to robbing of not only our lives and livelihoods but of our liberties and freedoms as well. As an example of how national interest is pursued in Bangladesh one may cite the many promises this Emergency Government made to us when it imposed itself on us on 11 January 2007 and all of which it has now belied; it cited the national interest of protecting the nation against a civil war by imposing an Emergency; it put all or most of the national level politicians in jails in the national interest of eradicating corruption from politics and it cited the necessity of reforming politics and imposing good governance for the interest of the nation. Now of course it has released all the politicians from jails again in national interest of holding a "free, fair and credible" election with participation of all political parties; it has rehabilitated corrupt businessmen and corrupt bureaucrats through the Better Business Forum and the Truth and Accountability Commission in the name of national interest and finally it has given up entirely on political reforms and good governance. As far as the populace is concerned, their national interests lie in ensuring for themselves such freedoms and liberties as will allow them to have a minimum control over their lives and livelihoods. If the Emergency Government, the AL and the BNP are able to provide the populace with this minimum of national interest all the differing perspectives would have been resolved and the purpose would have been served.